



CONGRESSMAN JIM SENSENBRENNER NEWS FROM CONGRESS

NUMBER 149 -- JUNE 1999

WHY BOMBING KOSOVO WAS A *BIG MISTAKE*

On March 24, President Clinton began a bombing war against Yugoslavia without consulting Congress or obtaining its approval in advance. One month later, the House rejected a declaration of war against Yugoslavia by a 2-427 vote and failed to approve the air campaign by a 213-213 tie. I voted against both measures. Just 30 days later, the President became the first chief executive in history to directly violate the War Powers Act of 1973 by continuing the bombing in spite of Congress' disapproval of the air campaign. The War Powers Act, passed in response to the lengthy U.S. involvement in Vietnam, requires the President to withdraw American military forces from hostilities after 60 days unless Congress gives express consent for continued involvement.

For this reason, I have joined 30 of my colleagues in suing the President pursuant the War Powers Act to stop the President's war. Although the federal district court dismissed the suit in early June, we have appealed. It is my hope that the Supreme Court will eventually hear the case, rule on the constitutionality of the War Powers Act and, most importantly, clearly define when the President must obtain the approval of Congress before commencing or continuing a war.

The air war in Yugoslavia was a profound mistake for many reasons. Although the bombing has ceased, it promises to affect American foreign policy for years to come. Let me give a few examples:

The war's purpose was to protect the Kosovar Albanians, but the bombing campaign has had the opposite effect. The President's stated purpose for beginning military action was to protect Albanians in Kosovo from Serb oppression. However, according to published reports, he rejected warnings given prior to the start of the air war by his own CIA Director, George

Tenant, who predicted the Serbs would use NATO bombing as an excuse to expel increasing numbers of ethnic Albanians from their Kosovo homes. That is exactly what happened, and over 985,000 are now either in refugee camps in the neighboring countries or at relocation sites around the world.

The war has caused the biggest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. President Clinton has already obtained \$210 million in U.S. tax dollars from various federal agencies and departments to help pay for the costs of feeding and housing these unfortunate people in Macedonia, Albania, and elsewhere throughout Europe and around the world. More money will undoubtedly be requested, particularly since most of the refugees will be unable to return home before next winter. Paying for the refugee crisis will be expensive, and American taxpayers will foot most of the bill.

The war has turned NATO from a defensive alliance into an interventionist police force, thus confirming the fears of nationalists in Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe that a post-Cold War NATO will be used to thwart internal policies that would be better acted upon by the people of these new democracies.

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REMINDER...

TOWN HALL
MEETINGS

AND

OFFICE HOURS

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Representative Sensenbrenner greets teacher Robert Chesney of Ozaukee High School. Mr. Chesney, a recipient of this year's national Time Warner Cable Crystal Apple Award for excellence in education, visited Washington, DC in June and met with Rep. Sensenbrenner to discuss education issues and the innovative teaching methods that won him recognition.

LOCKING AWAY SOCIAL SECURITY

Consider this: according to the most recent Social Security Trustees' Report, Social Security will begin paying out more in benefits than it takes in around 2014. Beginning in approximately 2010, the baby-boom generation's retirement will strain the financial resources of the system to such an extent that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) now predicts that without dramatic action, the Social Security Trust Fund will go bankrupt by 2032.



Yet Americans for generations to come will continue to depend on Social Security as an integral part of their incomes after retirement. Social Security as we know it is a pay-as-you-go system. Current workers pay into the system in the expectation that these funds will be there for them when they retire. One may ask why excess Social Security tax dollars have not been set aside until now to help pay future benefits, but instead have been repeatedly raided and spent on other government programs. This leaves Social Security with nothing but a stack of IOUs representing a promise to pay future benefits. The cash is long gone.

The time for action is now. Already the Republican 106th Congress has begun working towards saving the Social Security system prior to the strain of the baby-boom retirement. The Social Security surplus is expected to total \$1.8 trillion over the next 10 years, and the fiscal year (FY) 2000 Budget Resolution called for locking away 100 percent of this surplus for the nation's elderly.

Now it's time to take the next step. That is why I joined nearly 40 of my colleagues in cosponsoring H.R. 1259, the **Social Security and Medicare Safe Deposit Box Act**,

which passed the House by a vote of 416 - 12 on May 26, 1999. This bill provides the lock to the Social Security lock box that will keep safe the benefits of senior citizens today and tomorrow.

While President Clinton wants to spend \$52 billion of the Social Security surplus in FY 2000 and embark on a risky plan to invest some of the remaining funds in the stock market, the Social Security and Medicare Safe Deposit Box Act unlocks Social Security funds *only* for Social Security or Medicare. It requires all accountings of the federal budget, both in Congress and the Executive branch, to exclude Social Security dollars from final budget totals so that future presidents and lawmakers will not be tempted to dip into them to fund other spending programs.

Specifically, H.R. 1259 locks up Social Security by establishing procedural mechanisms to prevent the House and Senate from considering any legislation that would attempt to use Social Security funds. This bill further protects our future by requiring a separate vote in the House of Representatives and a 60-vote super-majority in the Senate to pass such bills.

We cannot continue to gamble with our nation's future. The American people have spoken, and the House and Senate have listened. The House and Senate voted decisively and overwhelmingly, 426-2 and 97-2 respectively, to reject the President's budget, which simply doubles the IOUs and fails to protect Social Security funds from continued plundering. We must save now to provide security later. We can lock away \$1.8 trillion over the next 10 years for Social Security and Medicare – that's \$100 billion more than the President envisions. The Social Security and Medicare Safe Deposit Box Act makes this possible. ■

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Tuesday, July 6

7:00 p.m. Fort Atkinson City Hall
101 N. Main St.

Wednesday, July 7

7:00 p.m. Sheboygan Mead Library
710 N. 8th St.

Thursday, July 8

7:00 p.m. Watertown Municipal Building
106 Jones St.

Sunday, July 11

7:00 p.m. Beaver Dam City Hall
205 S. Lincoln Ave.

Sunday, July 18

7:00 p.m. Thiensville Village Hall
250 Elm St.

Sunday, July 25

7:00 p.m. Hartford City Hall
109 N. Main St.

Sunday, August 1

7:00 p.m. Elm Grove Village Hall
13600 Juneau Blvd.

Sunday, August 8

7:00 p.m. West Bend City Hall
1115 S. Main St.

Sunday, August 22

7:00 p.m. Oconomowoc City Hall
174 E. Wisconsin Ave.

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The war has emboldened the hawks in Russia and permanently damaged relations with China. Even more serious is the fact that Russia faces both presidential and parliamentary elections next year. Should a coalition of communists or ultra-nationalists win either of these elections, the new Russian leaders will take a much harder line with the United States than the governments of Boris Yeltsin have. That will be the biggest headache our next President faces since the consequences of the 2000 Russian elections will not be felt until after President Clinton leaves office. Further, the consequences of the accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade will chill relations between the U.S. and the world's most populated country for years to come and allow the Chinese to up the price of trade and other deals.

The war has set a dangerous precedent for tyranny in developing nations. A United Nations prosecutor has indicted Yugoslav President Milosevic for war crimes. However, should any negotiated deal allow him to escape

justice, a precedent will be set allowing future tyrants to believe they may commit acts of genocide and human rights abuses with little or no accountability.

Once peace-keepers are sent to Kosovo, they will be there for a very long time and U.S. taxpayers will foot this bill as well. The latest strife in the Balkans is an extension of ethnic and religious battles which have raged in that region for over 600 years. Whether peace-keepers are there for 100 days or 100 years, it is almost certain that fighting will begin again after they leave. Remember, when President Clinton sent U.S. peacekeepers to Bosnia in 1995, he said they would be home by Christmas 1996. Two more Christmases have passed, and the troops are still there with no exit strategy in sight. That exercise cost us between \$12 billion and \$15 billion, money which could have been used for saving Social Security, enacting tax cuts and funding domestic programs. Sending troops into Kosovo ultimately will show that history does, in fact, repeat itself. ■



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OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday, July 6

8:30 a.m. Johnson Creek Village Hall
9:15 a.m. Helenville Fire Hall
10:15 a.m. Sullivan Village Hall
11:15 a.m. Wales Village Hall
12:45 p.m. Genesee Town Hall
1:30 p.m. North Prairie Village Hall
2:15 p.m. Eagle Village Hall
3:00 p.m. Palmyra Village Hall
4:00 p.m. Dousman Village Hall

Wednesday, July 7

8:30 a.m. Nashotah Village Hall
9:15 a.m. Merton Village Hall
10:00 a.m. Pewaukee Village Hall
10:45 a.m. Sussex Village Hall
12:15 p.m. Butler Village Hall
1:00 p.m. Lannon Village Hall

2:00 p.m. Slinger Village Hall
2:45 p.m. Jackson Village Hall
3:45 p.m. Newburg Village Hall

Thursday, July 8

8:30 a.m. Burnett Town Hall
9:15 a.m. Waupun City Hall
10:00 a.m. Brownsville City Hall
10:45 a.m. Kekoskee Village Hall
11:30 a.m. Lomira Village Hall
1:00 p.m. Theresa Village Hall
1:45 p.m. Kewaskum Village Hall
2:45 p.m. Addison Town Hall
3:30 p.m. Rubicon Town Hall
4:15 p.m. Ashippun Town Hall

Friday, July 9

8:30 a.m. Howards Grove Village Hall
9:15 a.m. Kohler Village Hall

10:00 a.m. Oostburg Village Hall
10:45 a.m. Adell Senior Center
11:30 a.m. Random Lake library
1:00 p.m. Cedar Grove Library
1:45 p.m. Belgium Village Hall
2:30 p.m. Fredonia Village Hall
3:15 p.m. Saukville Village Hall

Friday, July 23

8:30 a.m. Ixonia Town Hall
9:15 a.m. Lebanon Town Hall
10:00 a.m. Neosho Village Hall
10:45 a.m. Iron Ridge Village Hall
11:30 a.m. Hustisford Village Hall
1:00 p.m. Clyman Village Hall
1:45 p.m. Lowell Village Hall
2:30 p.m. Reeseville Village Hall
3:15 p.m. Waterloo City Hall



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Town Hall Meetings and Office Hours provide me the chance to hear your views on the issues before Congress or to help you with problems you may be experiencing in dealing with a federal agency. I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting nearest your home. Please contact my district office if you require special accommodations to attend.

Congressman

**JIM
SENSENBRENNER**



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**NEWS FROM
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